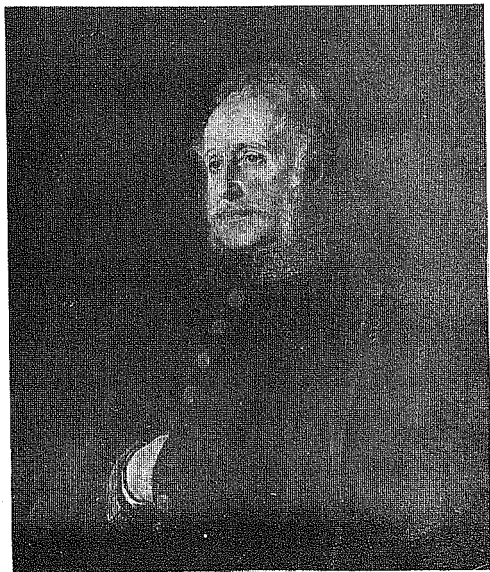


LIFE  
OF  
BRIAN  
HOUGHTON  
HODGSON

BRITISH RESIDENT AT  
THE COURT OF NEPAL

WILLIAM WILSON HUNTER



B. Skene Campbell Pin.

M. G. S. H. D.

*B. H. Hodgson*

1872 - AETAT 72.



ASIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
NEW DELHI ★ MADRAS ★ 1991

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\* 5 SRIPURAM FIRST STREET, MADRAS-600014.

[v]

OAKEN HOLT, CUMNOR,  
NEAR OXFORD.

DEAR MRS. HODGSON,

*This book owes much to your care and skill in collecting private letters. I also thank you for other help, and for many touches of the inner nature of him whose life it records. It would have been his wish that an effort to perpetuate his memory should be associated with your name. I beg therefore to dedicate it to you.*

*Believe me,*

*Sincerely yours,*

W. W. HUNTER.

September 1st, 1896.



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## CHAPTER II.

OLD HAILEYBURY: 1816—1817.

**H**AILEYBURY COLLEGE, which Brian Hodgson entered in 1816, was not unworthy of the magnificent design of its founders. It formed the embodiment in stone and lime of the East India Company's resolve to govern well the empire which they had won. From 1600 down to the second half of the eighteenth century the Company's servants, alike in England and in India, had been sea-captains, merchants, and mercantile clerks. Their territorial conquests from 1757 onwards demanded an entirely different class of men. But the necessity of making the "annual investment" wherewith to pay an annual dividend for some time obscured the change which had taken place. A generation of officials passed away before the Court of Directors definitely realised that they had grown into the Sovereign Power in India, and that their main function was government rather than trade.

It was not until the year 1800 that a regular institution was formed for the training of the civil servants of the Company. This institution, known as the College of Fort William, was established by the far-seeing Marquis Wellesley in Calcutta. The Court of Directors, however, considered its scope too wide, sanctioned it only on a reduced scale, and determined to create a place of education of their own in England for their young civil servants. Their intention, expressed in 1802, received effect in 1805 by the purchase of the Haileybury estate in Hertfordshire for £5,900. The building was completed in 1809 at an esti-

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**H**AILEYBURY COLLEGE, which Brian Hodgson entered in 1816, was not unworthy of the magnificent design of its founders. It formed the embodiment in stone and lime of the East India Company's resolve to govern well the empire which they had won. From 1600 down to the second half of the eighteenth century the Company's servants, alike in England and in India, had been sea-captains, merchants, and mercantile clerks. Their territorial conquests from 1757 onwards demanded an entirely different class of men. But the necessity of making the "annual investment" wherewith to pay an annual dividend for some time obscured the change which had taken place. A generation of officials passed away before the Court of Directors definitely realised that they had grown into the Sovereign Power in India, and that their main function was government rather than trade.

It was not until the year 1800 that a regular institution was formed for the training of the civil servants of the Company. This institution, known as the College of Fort William, was established by the far-seeing Marquis Wellesley in Calcutta. The Court of Directors, however, considered its scope too wide, sanctioned it only on a reduced scale, and determined to create a place of education of their own in England for their young civil servants. Their intention, expressed in 1802, received effect in 1805 by the purchase of the Haileybury estate in Hertfordshire for £5,900. The building was completed in 1809 at an esti-

of hamlets consisting of one house," says Traill, "is very great."<sup>1</sup>

This settlement, based on the data collected in 1819-20 carried a little further the principles which had been acted on since our deliverance of the country from Gurkha oppression six years previously. Broadly speaking, it assigned a fixed demand to each village, based upon an examination of the actual capabilities of the village lands. The Gurkha system had been one of confiscation and squeezes. "The country," wrote Traill in his Report of 1822-23, "including all the villages hitherto reserved for the support of the Court and their attendants, was parcelled out in separate assignments to the invading army." "The villages were everywhere assessed rather on a consideration of the supposed means of the inhabitants than on any computation of their agricultural produce. Balances soon ensued, to liquidate which the family and effects of the defaulter were seized and sold. The consequent depopulation was rapid and excessive."<sup>2</sup> For a time indeed it seemed that, under Gurkha rule, the only alternative for the Kumaun hill-men lay between flight to the jungles and the sale of themselves and their women and children into slavery on the Indian plains.

It was in vain that the central Gurkha Government in Nepal tried to arrest the depopulation of Kumaun. It had, indeed, issued a commission of inquiry from the Nepalese capital to fix the Kumaun revenues at reasonable rates. Much of its machinery for the collection of the revenue, and its registers of village cultivation, were continued by the British administration. But notwithstanding a Gurkha inspection of the resources of each village, the Gurkha "assessment must be viewed," says Traill, "rather as a tax founded on the number of inhabitants than on the extent of cultivation."<sup>3</sup> In spite of an elaborate system

<sup>1</sup> Report, p. 12. Reprint of 1851.

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of returns and registers, made up village by village and bearing the seal of the Gurkha State, "the absence of a controlling power on the spot rendered the arrangement almost nugatory."<sup>1</sup>

The Gurkha revenue-agents and soldiers squeezed the last drop out of the people in Kumaun; in the Garhwal district their exactions were so heavy that even the Gurkha military chiefs found it impossible to enforce them. We have seen that the legal demand of the Gurkha Government, apart from the extortions of its local agents and their underlings, amounted to the double assessment which our officers thought reasonable when the province passed under British rule. According to the Gurkha system, the cultivators who remained were responsible for making good the whole revenue. But the depopulation under the Gurkha oppressions had rendered it impossible for the Gurkha taskmasters to wring the full demand out of the remaining inhabitants. Fiscal brutalities and depopulation kept pace together, the revenue balances under the Gurkhas "annually increasing from the attempt to enforce the full demand."<sup>2</sup>

The settlement of 1820-21, following upon Traill's previous reforms, put an end to this state of things for ever. In order to adjust fairly the taxation of the land, Traill and Hodgson made a sort of revenue census. They not only counted the villages and arranged them into the four classes mentioned on p. 47; they also made a careful estimate of the number of houses and the quantity of cultivated land in each village, together with the number of buffaloes, cows, and oxen. The tabular statements which they were thus enabled to prepare look very complete. But, as a matter of fact, Traill and Hodgson had to arrive at the area under cultivation by a series of guesses instead of by actual measurement. They adopted the native system, current throughout the hills, of calculating the area of fields by the supposed quantity of grain which would be

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If any young Indian civilian, in the solitude and ill-health amid which some of his earlier years may be spent, feels inclined to despond about the reality of his work, let him read the foregoing paragraph. No lives could be more solitary than those of Traill and Hodgson in Kumaun, and few civilians have had to struggle so hard with ill-health as the latter during the first part of his Indian service. Yet not only their work but their very words are alive and bearing fruit to this day.

There is something very refreshing in the sight of these two young men setting to work with almost boyish zest to take stock of the *terra incognita* of a new British province. They found the population divided into two classes: human beings and ghosts. Of both classes Traill furnishes an equally serious account. The ethnical origin of the various human races in the mountains is discussed, and a realistic description of their customs winds up with a tribute to their integrity. "Of the honesty of the hill people," writes Traill, "too much praise cannot be given. Property of all kinds is left exposed in every way, without fear and without loss. In those districts whence periodical migration to the *Tarai* takes place, the villages are left with almost a single occupant during half the year, and though a great part of the property of the villagers remains in their houses, no precaution is deemed necessary, except securing the doors against the ingress of animals, which is done by a bar of wood, the use of locks being as yet confined to the higher classes. In their pecuniary transactions with each other, the agricultural classes have rarely recourse to written engagements; bargains concluded by the parties joining hands (*hath marna*) in token of assent

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land-revenue fairly to the capabilities of each village. He became "the village ministerial officer entrusted with the collection of the Government demand, and with the supervision of the village police."<sup>1</sup> During the inquiries of Traill and Hodgson in 1819-20, he formed an invaluable link between the British officers and the people. It was from constant intercourse with the village head-men that the two young investigators chiefly obtained the information which made up Traill's *Statistical Sketch of Kumaun* two years later.

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BHIM SEN THAPPA—PREMIER OF NEPAL.  
ÆTAT 62.

V.L. COSTE PH. SC.

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It had not occurred to Bhim Sen that the custom of annually vacating all offices at the Panjani could be applied to his own. He was now to find that the death of the clear-headed old Queen was allowing new forces to spring into existence with which he would have to reckon.

Hodgson saw the change coming, and at once realised what it meant alike to the Prime Minister and to the British position at Kathmandu. He firmly but courteously insisted on his Munshi being admitted to the Raja's presence, when sent on business from the Residency direct to the Prince. Without the right of direct audience it was impossible to know whether the communications of the British Government ever reached the Raja's ears. Within a month after he became Resident he submitted a confidential letter in his own handwriting to the Governor-General on "the state of parties in Nepal." Having described the relations of the Resident to the Raja with whom our treaty was made in 1816, he proceeds as follows:—<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Generally but somewhat loosely spoken of as "the Chautrias," of whom we shall presently hear more.

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